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ABSTRACT

Suggesting that teachers who encourage students to use many kinds of trade books across the curriculum are likely to be rewarded with students who are excited about learning, this fastback focuses on using children's literature across the curriculum. The fastback discusses reader response theory, connecting the curriculum through literature, guidelines for thematic studies, acquiring children's literature, literature in the content areas (social studies, science, mathematics, music, art), multicultural literature, and selecting multicultural literature. The fastback concludes that the current abundance of interesting informational and fiction books available to support all areas of the curriculum should encourage teachers to select them to enhance the subjects being taught. Contains 25 references. A list of 15 books for teachers and 80 books for children is attached. (RS)

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Using Children's Literature Across the Curriculum

Elinor P. Ross

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Using Children's Literature Across the Curriculum

by
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The chapter sponsors this fastback in memory of Mary Cudemo Schurig, who was a member of the chapter from 1980 until her death on 2 October 1993.

The passing of Mary Cudemo Schurig will create a void in all those who knew her. We are grateful to have had Mary's personal and fraternal friendship. We have known and been inspired by the beauty of this woman's life.

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Introduction

Although educators have long recognized the value of "authentic" children's literature for recreational reading, recently many teachers have discovered its potential for instruction. Publishers of basal readers have begun to include edited versions of popular children's books in their reading programs, as a result of a growing movement toward literature-based reading instruction. Many teachers now use so-called authentic children's books instead of or in addition to basal readers. Such books are called trade books and are the same as those found in libraries and bookstores.

Teachers also are discovering ways to use children's literature to supplement or replace textbooks in content areas. Textbooks provide comprehensive, sequential collections of facts as a framework for study, but they provide little motivation for learning. Because of restrictions imposed by adoption committees, textbooks must avoid controversy, offend no special interest group, and present supposedly objective points of view. Trade books, on the other hand, excite and enlighten readers by offering insights beyond the factual accounts found in textbooks. According to Lamme and Ledbetter, "It is the literature that forms the framework for explorations into the content. Textbooks in the content areas simply cannot match the flexibility, depth, or quality provided by trade books" (1990, p. 736).

Librarians, teachers, and students can select from an abundance of fine-quality trade books related to many content areas. From mum-

mies to mosques or turtles to titans, books are available on many topics and in a variety of styles, formats, genres, and reading levels. Most are carefully researched, attractively presented, and clearly organized.

Although teachers may continue to use textbooks because of district mandates or personal preferences, children's books can and should extend into every area of the curriculum. Here are several reasons for using well-chosen trade books:

- Within a single grade, students' reading levels may vary by several grade levels. Whereas a textbook is often aimed at grade level, trade books are available at a wide range of readability levels, thus challenging the gifted readers and ensuring success for the slower readers.
- Because they must cover a broad topic (such as general science or United States history), textbooks are limited in depth and point of view. Trade books often treat single subjects (ant colonies or Paul Revere, for example) from multiple perspectives and with imagination and fascinating detail.
- School districts adopt textbooks for several years and sometimes are unable to afford new adoptions, so some textbooks (especially in science) quickly become outdated. Recently published trade books enable readers to obtain current information about a specific topic.
- Trade books may arouse more interest in learning than do textbooks. Large, sometimes cumbersome, comprehensive textbooks can be discouraging, while slim, well-illustrated, trade books on special topics are more appealing. Textbooks are assigned, but trade books are chosen.
- Trade books are more likely than textbooks to affect the reader's emotions, personal associations, imagination, and attitudes. Because of their obligation to present the facts, textbooks often fail to communicate the feelings related to the tragedy of war, the horror of the Holocaust, the wonder of birth, or the beauty of nature.

Reader Response Theory

Depending on their experiences, prior knowledge, and purposes for reading, readers draw different meanings from the same text. For example, a camper might respond to Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*, a story of survival in the wilderness, by relating the story to personal experiences and learning new survival strategies from the main character's use of problem-solving skills. A city child, however, might simply view the story as an adventure with no personal relevance.

Louise Rosenblatt, a reader response theorist, considers reading to be a transaction, a two-way interaction between the reader and the text, with the reader constructing meaning from the text (McGee 1992; Rosenblatt 1991). During reading, the reader selects or rejects ideas and images, makes associations, and derives meaning from the text based on personal experiences.

According to Rosenblatt, readers may respond to a text along a continuum marked by *efferent*, or informational, responses at one end and by *aesthetic*, or emotional, responses at the other. While reading, the reader may shift from one position along the continuum to another. When the efferent stance is dominant, responses are factual, analytical, and centered on the information contained in the text. With the aesthetic stance, responses deal with feelings, attitudes, and lived-through experiences. These two stances are not contradictory, for reading is a mixture of both. The same selection can be read efferently and aesthetically. Thus, while reading primarily for information, we also may be feeling pleasure or sensing injustice.

When sharing literature with students, teachers should encourage both types of responses. For efferent responses, Zarillo and Cox (1992) suggest asking questions that relate to decoding, finding meanings of isolated words, recalling content, identifying features such as author and publisher, and analyzing the text. In order to promote aesthetic responses, they recommend giving children choices of reading situations, books, and types of responses; asking children to visualize; allowing children to focus on selected parts of the text; and encouraging children to relate their experiences or feelings to the text. Good questions to ask for aesthetic responses are:

How did you feel as you read the passage?
How did the author create the feelings in the text?
What are some interesting or unusual words?
What seems especially real to you?

Typically, teachers focus on efferent questions and answers to ensure that students learn information. In so doing, they may neglect the associated emotional experiences that bring greater depth and vision to the content. To encourage both intellectual and emotional responses, Cox and Many (1992) recommend that teachers:

- allow students to choose their type of response (for example, role playing, oral interpretation, drawing, dancing, writing) and have adequate time to reflect and respond;
- provide time for students to talk informally about their thoughts and ideas in order to gain personal understanding and insights;
- encourage students to relate stories to their personal experiences and to the lives of other story characters;
- focus on the students' responses and their experiences as they interact with text.

Susan Jeffers' *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* can generate both efferent and aesthetic responses. The book begins with historical information about the removal of the American Indians from their land, but it con-

tinues with Chief Seattle's emotional appeal to preserve the land and the water. The reader visualizes our land as it was when the American Indians held it, becomes aware of the waste of natural resources, lives through the experiences of displaced people, relates the story to local or personal situations, and considers alternatives. Thus the reader not only acquires knowledge of a period in history, but also responds emotionally to the situation.

Because of the comprehensive information they contain, textbooks are far more likely to evoke efferent than aesthetic responses. The knowledge gained often is superficial – a bundle of facts. On the other hand, children's literature related to content areas can bridge the gap between efferent and aesthetic reading by providing both information and emotional appeal (Sebesta 1989). Trade books are more likely to deal with moral and social issues that enable the reader to experience what life was really like at another time or place. Information accompanied by insight and sensitivity leads to greater understanding than facts alone can provide.

Connecting the Curriculum Through Literature

The Nazi occupation of Copenhagen in 1943 had everyone on edge – soldiers on street corners, food shortages, curfews, deprivations, and unspoken dangers. On their way home from school, 10-year-old Annemarie, her outspoken younger sister Kirsti, and her Jewish friend Ellen Rosen are commanded to halt and are questioned by the German police. Later, during the rounding up and "relocation" of the Jews, Annemarie is asked to take an active role in the Danish Resistance by helping to smuggle the Jewish people across the sea to Sweden. In spite of the secrets and the threat of danger, Annemarie courageously helps her friend Ellen and Ellen's family escape from the Nazis.

These vivid experiences from Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*, a first-rate historical fiction junior novel, make the Nazi occupation real for the reader. The frustration, the despair – but also the hope – of the Jewish people and the brave acts of members of the Danish Resistance make this period of history come alive. The reader not only gains information about World War II, but also feels intensely the suffering and fear experienced by the Danish people during the occupation.

Almost any genre in children's literature – poetry, essays, science fiction, and folktales – makes the curriculum more meaningful. The three most relevant genres are historical fiction, informational books, and biographies (Norton 1992; Tompkins and McGee 1993).

Historical fiction is a story that combines imagination with historical truths. Although the story itself is not true, an author may construct the story around actual events and people from history. The settings and conflicts must be authentic, and the beliefs and values of the characters must be realistic for the period. Many historical fiction books have won Newbery Awards, the highest award annually given for children's literature in the United States. Newbery Award winners include Patricia MacLachlan's *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, Paula Fox's *The Slave Dancer*, and Joan Blos' *A Gathering of Days*.

As in *Number the Stars*, also a Newbery winner, readers of historical fiction identify with realistic characters and become immersed in the experiences of these characters, thus developing sensitivities and insights about a period in history. They absorb the setting by experiencing it through the story, and they find themselves drawn into the action.

Informational (nonfiction) trade books have the widest application across the curriculum because of their diverse topics, from dinosaurs to the solar system, "how-to" books of crafts and hobbies, and discovery books that lead readers to solve problems and understand how things work. Many children enjoy reading informational books because of their appealing formats, abundant illustrations, and depth of information about subjects of special interest. What might seem cold, dull, and uninspiring in a textbook often comes to life when presented by an author who is impassioned by the subject. For example, Lois Ehlert is the author of several easy-to-read, brightly illustrated informational books for young children, including *Planting a Rainbow* and *Growing Vegetable Soup*. Detailed descriptions in both text and illustrations are found in David Macaulay's informational books for older students, which include *Castle*, *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction*, and *City*.

Sometimes considered a type of informational book, biographies are real-life stories about well-known people, such as presidents, sports figures, explorers, authors, and people who have overcome adversi-

ties. Well-written biographies feature authentic settings and accurate accounts of events. The traits of the main character must be consistent with what is known about him or her, although the author may fictionalize some dialogue or embellish some events to make the book more interesting for children to read.

Biographies for children should be more than retelling the events in someone's life; they should bring that person to life. Russell Freedman's *Lincoln: A Photobiography*, a Newbery winner, combines a readable and interesting text with photographs of Lincoln to enable readers to understand his life and personality. Biographies are particularly useful for relating important people to periods in history, but they also can extend into other areas of the curriculum. For example, Jane Goodall's *My Life with the Chimpanzees* and Russell Freedman's *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane* are useful in science.

A single, well-chosen book from one of these three genres can be used for a literature-based unit. The book should offer opportunities for in-depth study and should deal with important values and questions (Silva and Delgado-Larocco 1993). The teacher may read the book aloud chapter by chapter, or the children may read it for themselves from multiple copies.

A single book also can span the curriculum through links with several subjects. By using a web, the teacher can graphically depict connections between the book and various areas of the curriculum. There are many ways to construct a web, but essentially the target book is at the center and related areas of the curriculum radiate from it. No book is likely to extend naturally into every curriculum area, so some subjects may need to be taught directly. It is better to exclude subjects from the web that are not natural extensions of the book, rather than to force relationships that are artificial and contrived.

Figure 1 is an example of a web based on Patricia MacLachlan's *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, a story of pioneer family life. This historical fiction touches several areas of the curriculum.

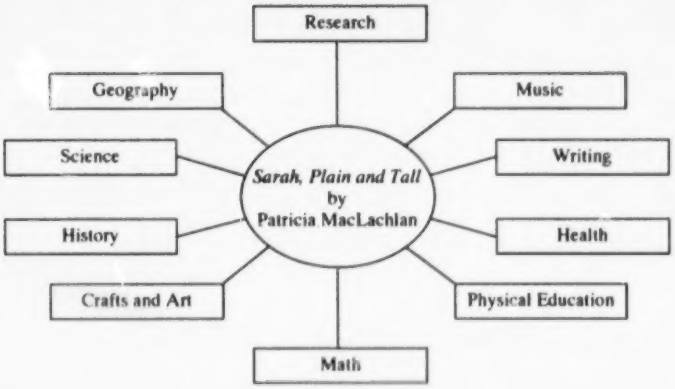

Figure 1. A web for the book, *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan.

Following are examples of student activities in four of the extended curricular areas:

Geography. On a U.S. map, identify the prairie lands. Find Maine and show the route Sarah might have taken to her new home. Compare the climates of Maine and the prairie.

Science. Investigate how crops were grown on the prairie. How was the land cultivated and how were the crops harvested? What problems did pioneer farmers have to overcome?

Health. Find out about the daily diet of prairie people. How do their meals compare to today's meals?

Physical education. Learn to play a frontier game. What kinds of physical activities did prairie children do?

In order to supplement *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, children may read other books about pioneer family life. Laura Ingalls Wilder's "Little House" books, perhaps the best-known children's historical fiction, show the importance of strong family relationships on the frontier.

In *Caddie Woodlawn*, author Carol Brink tells the frontier story of Caddie, an adventurous tomboy who plays with her brothers and befriends the Native Americans whom she meets. Informational books and biographies from this time period would help round out the theme.

Students learn effectively through thematic units because such units enable students to see relationships among ideas, vocabulary, facts, and concepts. They allow students to investigate topics in depth as they cross subject matter divisions to explore issues. Trade books, unrestricted by traditional subject matter boundaries, are a rich resource for such studies.

Another way to integrate the curriculum with children's literature is to develop themes that use several children's trade books as resources. For example, a theme might be trees. The goal might be to understand how trees contribute to the environment. Reasonable links could be made to science, social studies, health, values, and other areas. Following is a list of possible resource trade books for such a thematic unit:

Aliki. *The Story of Johnny Appleseed.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963. Johnny Appleseed plants seeds that grow into apple trees wherever he goes.

Cherry, Lynne. *The Great Kapok Tree.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990. While sleeping under a tree in the rain forest, a man is told by the animals not to chop down the tree.

Dorros, Arthur. *Rain Forest Secrets.* New York: Scholastic, 1990. This book presents a close-up view of rain forests.

Ehlert, Lois. *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf.* New York: Scholastic, 1992. Text and colorful illustrations show how to plant and grow a tree.

Silverstein, Shel. *The Giving Tree.* New York: Harper & Row, 1956. A tree gives herself to a boy.

Udry, Janice. *A Tree Is Nice.* New York: Harper & Row, 1956. Paintings and words show the many uses for trees.

Wirth, Victoria. *Whisper from the Woods.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991. Illustrations and text depict the life cycle of a tree in the forest.

Themes may be adopted by an entire school, by a grade level, or by an individual teacher. An example of a schoolwide theme is peace. Students at all grade levels study various aspects of peace, with each grade level and class interpreting the theme in a different way, depending on the students' interests. One classroom might think about peace in terms of inner peace, which can lead to an investigation of stress and a study of the heart. Another classroom might interpret peace in terms of resolving international conflicts, which can lead to a study of the United Nations and other peace efforts. A schoolwide thematic study might culminate in an assembly program where students share what they have learned about peace.

Guidelines for Thematic Studies

When initiating theme studies, a teacher or team of teachers should first consider the instructional focus – concepts, goals, and skills. With the help of the librarian, teachers should seek related resource materials, particularly trade books related to the topic. Student activities should be tentatively identified, and a plan for evaluation of student progress should be determined. Once these components are in place, the teacher can introduce the theme to the students, perhaps by reading a book that embraces the major concepts. Then the teacher should invite students to contribute their own ideas to round out the theme and allow them to make choices about specific areas to investigate.

For the special needs child, thematic studies offer many opportunities for success. Much work is done with the whole class, with partners, and in groups, so that the special learner is a participant. Since informational books are available at all levels, slower readers can

choose books that have less print but many illustrations. Some books also are available on audio or video tape.

With thousands of children's books available, how can teachers know how to choose the best of these to use with themes? Guidelines for selecting historical fiction include a worthy theme and authentic setting, as well as conflicts, values, and language that reflect the time period (Norton 1991).

Guidelines for selecting nonfiction trade books are based on criteria for the recently established NCTE Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children (Vardell 1991). Not surprisingly, the first criterion is accuracy. Facts should be current and complete; stereotypes should be avoided; diverse viewpoints should be included; and there should be a balance of fact and theory. The second criterion, organization, includes logical development, clear sequence, and recognizable patterns and interrelationships. Design, the third criterion, asks if the book is attractive and readable, has illustrations that go along with the text, and uses a suitable format. The final criterion is style, which considers such factors as interest, author's enthusiasm, stimulation of wonder and curiosity, and appropriate use of terminology and language.

Looking at book selection from a broader perspective, Bernice Cullinan identified three essential considerations for selecting nonfiction: the integrity of the author, the tone of the book, and the content of the work (Moss 1991). Authors with integrity are honest and straightforward with their readers. They distinguish between facts and theories, present different viewpoints, and support generalizations with facts. The author's tone should enable the reader to sense the presence of a real person behind the writing, someone who is communicating directly with the reader.

Some books are controversial, particularly because of perceived stereotypes. In order to avoid censorship problems, Sebesta (1989) recommends having a policy for dealing with controversial books that mandates that books present information fairly and accurately. Stu-

dents should have opportunities to deal with controversy so that they can learn to think critically and make reasoned judgments.

Many selection aids and resources are available to help with choosing books (Moss 1991; Pillar 1987), and a partial listing is included as an appendix in this fastback. Children's book selection guides include bibliographies, indices, and subject encyclopedias, organized by author, title, illustrators, or subject. Publishers' newsletters and catalogues also list sources of trade books. The Children's Book Council, along with the National Science Teachers Association and the National Council for the Social Studies, compiles annual annotated bibliographies of "Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children" and "Notable Children's Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies."

Acquiring Children's Literature

Funds for purchasing new books often are limited, but teachers can investigate several sources outside the school budget. Small, special-purpose grants may be available; and parent-teacher organizations may raise money for books. Several teachers who present the same unit may gather books and rotate them throughout the year. Bonus points from book clubs, such as Trumpet, Scholastic, and Troll, provide a source of free books; and garage sales and second-hand or discount bookstores may offer book bargains. Deferring purchase of new textbooks frees up money to buy trade books. The search for books should not be limited to the teacher's resources, but should include the students, who may discover books in their own homes that will enhance the theme. When students have made personal contributions, they have invested themselves in the study and are more motivated to learn.

Librarians can support theme studies in several ways. When they are aware of themes, they can select and order appropriate books that span a range of readability levels. They can introduce students and teachers to these books through book talks, displays, and story telling; and they can allow teachers to check out a large number of related books for the duration of the thematic unit. Collaboration between

teachers and librarians is essential as schools move toward whole language and literature-based reading programs (Lamme and Ledbetter 1990).

Literature in the Content Areas

Asking children to use their prior knowledge to predict what books will be about helps them evaluate the potential usefulness of books they select. Hess (1991) suggests asking students to brainstorm questions they want answered in order to set purposes for reading.

Teachers also should encourage students to brainstorm ideas, identify areas of interest, find appropriate books and other resource materials, and conduct research (Norton 1993*b*). When students brainstorm ideas for a web such as the one shown in Figure 1, they classify the ideas according to items that belong together. The labels they give these categories become subtopics for study. Calling up prior knowledge and using appropriate terminology for the web sets the stage for enabling students to read purposefully.

Instead of simply recalling information from a text, students predict, brainstorm, classify, and evaluate in preparation for their investigation. During group discussions, they compare sources of information, check one book with another to find discrepancies, confirm ideas, and gain new viewpoints. They evaluate sources in terms of copyright dates and author qualifications. When students arrive at divergent views, they analyze the issues, perhaps through debate or persuasive writing. With informational books, content area study reaches depths that are not possible with broad-based textbooks (Beck and McKeown 1991; Hess 1991; Young and Vardell 1993).

Following are several different curricular areas showing appropriate literature for each, along with ways to use trade books as the focus for learning.

Social Studies

Social studies covers a vast range of information, including history, geography, sociology, and economics. Trade books for elementary students are available for nearly any social studies topic.

When the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage occurred recently, many books were published about Columbus. Focusing on the geography of Columbus' voyage, Norton (1993*a*) identifies five themes: location (where the story takes place and why), place (physical features and characteristics of the people), relationships (cultural and environmental interactions), movement (of people, ideas, and materials), and regions (formation and change by political divisions, languages, and vegetation). Some of these books present a balanced view of Columbus' voyage and its impact on history, whereas others portray Columbus as an idealized hero and make no mention of the existing civilizations in the New World (Galda 1992/1993).

Among the recommended books about Columbus are Piero Ventura's *1492: The Year of the New World*, Patricia Lauber's *Who Discovered America? Mysteries and Puzzles of the New World*, Jean Fritz's *Where Do You Think You're Going, Christopher Columbus?*, and Michael Foreman and Richard Seaver's *The Boy Who Sailed with Columbus*. Six children's authors pooled their talents to write *The World in 1492* (Fritz et al. 1992), a beautifully illustrated book that shows what major areas of the world were like about 500 years ago.

Taking an imaginary journey via literature, particularly historical fiction and biography, creates interest in distant lands and other time periods (Johnson and Ebert 1992; Pike 1991). Preparing for the trip might include designing and equipping a hot-air balloon (or whatever means of travel the students prefer), planning an itinerary, mapping locations, deciding what to find out, gathering resource materials,

and reporting by journal entries, role playing, or art expressions. Trade books should be readily available on the places and time periods to be visited.

Another way to approach themes in social studies is for the teacher to select a highly motivational, well-written book that relates to the topic or issue to be studied and read it aloud to the class in order to create interest and discussion that lead to further investigation. Using the book as the core, teacher and students can construct a web by brainstorming thoughts related to the topic. Eventually, these thoughts can be organized into major concepts and related ideas. Students can sign up to research one of the major concepts, and the teacher can place students in groups according to their first or second choices.

A River Ran Wild by Lynne Cherry is an example of a book that might be used as a focus for study. The beautiful illustrations, the historical developments, and the issue of pollution motivate students to investigate. Full of facts about New England from the 1600s until recently, the book contains much information for efferent responses; but it derives emotional appeal from attitudes toward the forests and rivers, the devastation of pollution, and the eventual reclamation of the river. The books listed below are related trade books.

Baker, Jeannie. *Where the Forest Meets the Sea.* London: Walker Books, 1987. A boy and his father visit a rain forest that is haunted by memories of dinosaurs and aborigines.

Brown, Ruth. *The World that Jack Built.* New York: Dutton, 1991. A factory and a river, along with a cat and a butterfly, are key elements in this anti-pollution book.

Dr. Seuss. *The Lorax.* New York: Random House, 1971. When factories take over, the Truffala Trees disappear.

Earthworks Group. *50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth.* New York: Scholastic, 1990. The book presents practical ways for children to help save the environment.

Jeffers, Susan. *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky.* New York: Dial, 1991. Chief Seattle tells of the Native Americans' reverence for the land and water.

Macaulay, David. *Mill.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983. Here are illustrations and descriptions of mills in nineteenth century New England.

Paterson, Katherine. *Lyddie.* New York: Lodestar, 1991. A factory girl works in the mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1800s.

Speare, Elizabeth George. *The Sign of the Beaver.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983. A Penobscot Indian boy helps Matt survive in the Maine wilderness in the 1700s.

Weitzman, David. *Windmills, Bridges, and Old Machines: Discovering Our Industrial Past.* New York: Scribner's, 1982. This book presents the work of America's early engineers and builders.

Science

Science informational books serve two purposes: to provide information, of course, and to stimulate curiosity. Facts alone are not enough; good informational books should make the reader want to know "how" and "why." May Garelick's *Where Does the Butterfly Go When It Rains?* does the job well by giving information about how animals protect themselves from the rain and by making the reader wonder about the answer to the question posed in the title.

Some informational books appeal to children because they give facts in a story context. Tomie de Paola in *The Popcorn Book* tells the story of two children who are making popcorn, but the book also gives information about types of popcorn, its discovery, how to make it, and much more. In *On the Day You Were Born*, Debra Frasier focuses on the birth of a baby but also poetically describes the earth – the pull of the moon, the rising tides, and the falling rain.

Joanna Cole created the popular "Magic School Bus" series, which humorously combines story with fact. Ms. Frizzle, the wacky but smart science teacher, takes the children by school bus on a journey to the waterworks where they shrink to the size of raindrops, on a

drive to the center of the earth to learn about rocks, inside the human body to find out how food makes energy, and into outer space to learn about the solar system.

Report writing is an effective way to plan instruction that centers on science informational books because it involves students in gathering, organizing, and synthesizing material on a topic (Freeman 1991). Upper-grade students might begin their work by using a book such as David Macaulay's *The Way Things Work* as the stimulus for investigation. This comprehensive, illustrated guide to machines can provide a framework for finding related resource books on such subtopics as electricity, nuclear power, automation, telecommunications, and magnetism.

As students explore different subtopics, they can select themes for group study and then locate books for gathering information. When they take notes from different sources, they observe discrepancies, which they must resolve by considering the credibility of each source. After data are selected and organized, students can begin writing their reports. Students can use books as models for deciding what format to use for reporting (Freeman 1991). Possibilities include pop-up books (Tomie de Paola's *Giorgio's Village*), how-to books (Jim Arnosky's *Freshwater Fish and Fishing*), annotated catalogues (Helen Sattler's *The Book of Eagles*), and poetry (John Hartford's *The Steamboat in the Cornfield*).

Mathematics

Early counting books playfully invite children to learn the order of numbers, the correspondence between numbers and objects, and to count by two's, five's, or ten's. In *Count and See* Tana Hoban uses black-and-white photographs to show the correspondence among familiar objects, number words, and numerals. In the wordless picture book, *Anno's Counting Book*, Mitsumasa Anno creates an ever-expanding village by showing illustrations that begin with one of each object on the first page and gradually increase to 12 of each on the

last page. Two counting books with humorous illustrations and text are Rod Trinca's *One Woolly Wombat* and Jeff Sheppard's *The Right Number of Elephants.*

Nonfiction books help students understand more complex mathematical concepts. David Schwartz's *How Much Is a Million?* helps children understand the enormity of a million, a billion, and a trillion with ridiculous situations and illustrations. He shows how big a goldfish bowl would have to be to hold a million goldfish, how many years it would take to count to one billion, and how far into outer space kids would go if one trillion of them stood on top of each other. Similarly, in *If You Made a Million*, Schwartz deals with the concept of money by showing the values of coins, how banks operate, and what to do with a million dollars. Such books build an efferent-aesthetic foundation for understanding math (Sebesta 1989).

Music

Story and folk songs are a logical extension for themes, and authors have created many fine books, often with music included. Pete Seeger's story-song *Abiyoyo* was adapted from an old South African folktale and tells how a boy with a ukulele and his father with a magic wand conquered the cruel giant Abiyoyo. Aliki's brightly illustrated *Go Tell Aunt Rhody* is based on a popular American folk song, and Ezra Jack Keats' colorful edition of *The Little Drummer Boy* celebrates Christmas. *All Night, All Day: A Child's First Book of African-American Spirituals* by Ashley Bryan is a collection of 20 spirituals with illustrations that reflect the culture.

Books about music and musicians also can enrich the curriculum for the very young. Lois Ehlert's *THUMP, THUMP, Rat-a-Tat-Tat* provides the basic instruments and sounds of a marching band, just the motivation needed for starting a class rhythm band. Two biographies are Bryna Stevens' *Handel and the Famous Sword Swallower of Halle*, the story of Handel's boyhood, and Catherine Brighton's

Mozart: Scenes from the Childhood of the Great Composer, the life of Mozart from age 4 to 11 as told by his sister.

Art

The rich and varied illustrations of award-winning picture books are themselves subjects for learning about art. Comparing the art work in different versions of the same story, such as Nancy Burkert's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* with Disney's illustrations of the same story, can help children contrast media and artists' styles. Books featuring the geometric designs of Native Americans include Gerald McDermott's *Arrow to the Sun* and Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve's *Dancing Teepees*. Leo and Diane Dillon portray African colors and designs with their illustrations in *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions*, by Margaret Musgrove, and *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*, by Verna Aardema.

Young children will delight in such books as Ellen Walsh's *Mouse Paint*, a clever story of mice who mix colors, and Tomie de Paola's *The Art Lesson*, which shows Tommy's somewhat disappointing early experience with school art. Students of any age can learn much about art from Philip Yenawine's *Stories*, and older students can benefit from Jan Greenberg's *The Painter's Eye: Learning to Look at Contemporary Art*. Many children's art books focus on how to draw pictures or make crafts, including Kinney and Kinney's *23 Varieties of Ethnic Art and How to Make Each One* and Annie Owen's *The Modeling Book*, which gives ideas and directions for creating a variety of crafts.

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Multicultural Literature

The rich diversity of ethnic groups in our society has led to heightened interest in multicultural literature across the curriculum. "Schools are . . . making multicultural education an emphasized part of the curriculum at all levels" (Yokota 1993, p. 156). Because children's literature reflects society's values and concerns, there is rapid growth in the publication of books with multicultural themes, settings, characters, and stories (Galda 1992/1993). Since literature is one way to transmit values, children can learn what adults consider to be appropriate ways of behaving, believing, and valuing as they read multicultural books (Bishop 1987). (For more information on values, see fastback 362 *Using Children's Literature to Develop Core Values*, by Linda J. Gibbs and Edward J. Earley.)

There are two principal benefits of using multicultural literature. First, minority children are affirmed by seeing members of their ethnic or linguistic groups pictured and described in literature. They find that members of their culture are authors and contributors to society in a variety of ways. Such recognition creates a sense of pride in their heritage and pleasure in identification with the literary characters, as well as a positive self-concept. Also, children learn best when they build on what they understand from their own experiences. Second, *all* children begin to appreciate different cultures, their customs, and their contributions as they read multicultural literature.

A good introduction to multicultural awareness is Peter Spier's *People*, a picture book showing the similarities and differences of people around the world. The book covers such diverse topics as people's shapes and colors, eyes and noses, feasts and holidays, homes and pets, and languages and customs. Spier concludes by saying how dull it would be if we were all alike, and how wonderful it is that each of us is unlike any other.

Ethnic multicultural literature falls primarily into four major categories: African-American, Native American, Asian-American, and Hispanic. Of these, African-American literature is best represented with many biographies and folktales. In recent years a number of African-American authors and illustrators have created high-quality, award-winning books (Harris et al. 1993). Most older books about Native Americans contain traditional myths, legends, and folktales, often written for adults and too often stereotypical in both characters and language. Fortunately, newer books portray authentic Native American culture and, increasingly, are being written for children.

Both Asian-American and Hispanic books represent many separate and distinct cultures, each with its own traditions and literary heritage. Both are growing groups in the United States; and the past ten years have seen a marked increase in the number of books about Asian-Americans, though successful Hispanic literature for children is still hard to find. Most Asian-American literature consists of folktales and historical fiction, whereas Hispanic literature is primarily nonfiction with some folktales (Harris et al. 1993).

The three genres previously discussed – historical fiction, biography, and informational books – are important in multicultural literature. Informational books for various ethnic groups provide factual information useful for studying American history; historical fiction illuminates the facts by showing the sorrows and joys of people from the past; and biographies highlight the lives and contributions of different cultural groups (Bishop 1987).

In addition to these genres, realistic fiction is a rich source for understanding different cultures. The largest category of books about

minorities, realistic fiction enables nonwhite children to value their cultures when they see themselves and their lifestyles featured in books. Following are some examples of fiction for each of the four major ethnic groups discussed here.

Fiction about African-Americans focuses on the universal needs of children for younger readers, on searching for the past and understanding their ancestry for middle-grade children, and on facing personal and social conflicts for older children (Norton 1991). Valerie Flournoy's *The Patchwork Quilt* shows the loving relationship between a granddaughter and her grandmother as she works on a quilt that holds precious family memories. Although this experience of family relationships is not unique to African-Americans, through this story readers understand that these children have similar needs and family situations as do children from other ethnic backgrounds. Another example of fiction for young children is Patricia McKissack's *Mirandy and Brother Wind*, in which a girl tries to capture the wind to dance with her at a cakewalk. Two examples of fiction for older children are Virginia Hamilton's *Zeely*, a story about an imaginative young girl who believes Zeely is a Watusi Queen, and *Scorpions* by Walter Dean Myers, which deals with an inner-city society of gangs and drug dealers.

Although there are few Native American fiction books for children, existing books often show conflict between the old and new ways (Norton 1991). A particularly sensitive Native American story is *Knots on a Counting Rope*, in which Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault poetically tell of a blind boy who urges his grandfather to recount the story of his birth and the challenge of a horse race. Miska Miles' *Annie and the Old One* is the struggle of a young Navajo girl to accept her grandmother's approaching death as a natural part of the cycle of life. Jamake Highwater writes for older children and his books require careful reading to understand the traditional values, tribal customs, and use of symbolism.

Fiction that portrays Hispanic and Asian-American groups in positive ways is less widely available. Joseph Krumgold's . . . *And Now Miguel* is the story of a boy of Spanish descent who tries to prove his maturity and capability as a sheep man to his father, and Nicholasa Mohr's *Felita* is about a Puerto Rican girl who moves from the neighborhood she loves to a hostile neighborhood, then back to the old neighborhood. Laurence Yep is a leading author of Asian-American literature, and his book *Dragonwings* is based on the true story of a Chinese-American who built an airplane. The book shows the strength and support of the Chinese people for each other, as well as the prejudice and unfair treatment they may receive.

Multicultural literature also includes folktales, myths, and traditional stories from the oral traditions of each culture. Both single editions and anthologies of folklore can be found for any ethnic group. Virginia Hamilton's *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales* is an outstanding collection of stories about animals, fanciful experiences, the supernatural, and slave tales of freedom. A particularly fine Native American folklore collection is Jamake Highwater's *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey*, which includes tales from the many tribes Anpao encounters on his journey through the varied lands of American Indian culture.

Although no single volume includes all cultural variations within the Hispanic group, one example that represents the beliefs and values of a variety of Hispanic cultures is *The King of the Mountains: A Treasury of Latin American Folk Stories* by M.A. Jagendorf and R.S. Boggs. Laurence Yep collected folktales showing the values and imagination of the Asian people from Chinese Americans living in California for his book, *The Rainbow People*.

Selecting Multicultural Literature

Poorly chosen books misrepresent or stereotype an ethnic group. Guidelines for evaluating multicultural books center on the following four criteria (Norton 1991; Pang et al. 1992; Yokota 1993):

Cultural authenticity refers to representing issues so that they accurately reflect beliefs and values in order to give the reader a true sense of the culture. Details, such as typical activities and dialogue, should be a natural part of the story and should offer insights into the culture. Books should have historical accuracy, authentic settings, and realistic situations.

Individuality means that characters are portrayed as unique individuals, not simply as representatives of cultural groups. Stereotypes and stigmas related to specific groups should be avoided.

Illustrations are important, especially for young readers. They should accurately represent the people, their dress, and their lifestyles. All members of one race should not look identical with stereotypical features, but each character should have distinctive physical characteristics. When special clothing is worn, it should be appropriate for the occasion.

Social issues related to each culture should be presented in depth so that readers can examine the issues and make informed judgments. Problems should be discussed frankly and objectively. Nonwhite and white characters should be treated as equals, and nonwhites should solve problems for themselves without intervention from white benefactors.

The availability of authentic multicultural literature should be a priority for elementary schools. Books about ethnic groups can build bridges across cultures, as children from different backgrounds regard each other with understanding and appreciation.

Conclusion

Textbooks rarely create excitement about discovery or learning, but well-illustrated and interestingly written trade books are likely to do just that. The abundance of informational and fiction books available to support all areas of the curriculum should encourage teachers to select them to enhance the subjects they teach.

When presenting informational books to children, the teacher should help them to respond both efferently and aesthetically. Efferent responses are likely to take the form of reports and research projects, whereas children who respond aesthetically probably will express themselves through art, music, drama, or creative writing. Both types of responses are appropriate and important.

Thematic studies that use trade books, either as the hub of the unit or as resources, provide useful frameworks for content area study. The children and the teacher should negotiate choice of topics, with concern for both student interests and the curriculum framework. The process of webbing helps children to understand relationships among concepts and to divide a topic into workable chunks.

Multicultural literature should become an integral part of the curriculum so that children can appreciate the ethnic diversity of our culture. Developing positive attitudes toward different ethnic groups can best be done while children are young.

Although over half of the children's books published each year are nonfiction, teachers rarely choose them as read-aloud books or have

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them available in the classrooms for resources. These books are valuable for increasing vocabulary, broadening experiences, helping children see connections among school subjects, letting them become problem solvers and researchers, and luring them into learning content area information. Teachers who encourage students to use many kinds of trade books across the curriculum are likely to be rewarded with students who are excited about learning.

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